

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

Listing of Claims

1-4. (Canceled).

5. (New) An image processing method for generating a binary image by binarizing pixels of multivalued tones, the method comprising:

determining an intended pixel;

determining a pixel adjacent to said intended pixel;

detecting a density difference between said intended pixel and said adjacent pixel;

determining said intended pixel to be an edge portion in a case where the detected density difference is larger than a predetermined setting; and

setting, for the edge portion, a value of a binarization threshold to a first value when the detected density difference is a first magnitude and to a second value when the detected density difference is a second magnitude,

wherein said first value is lower than said second value and said first magnitude is larger than said second magnitude.

6. (New) An image processing apparatus for generating a binary image by binarizing pixels of multivalued tones, the apparatus comprising:

a first determination section that determines an intended pixel;

a second determination section that determines a pixel adjacent to said intended pixel;

a detection section that detects a density difference between said intended pixel and said adjacent pixel;

a third determination section that determines said intended pixel to be an edge portion if the detected density difference is larger than a predetermined setting; and

a setting section that sets, for the edge portion, a value of a binarization threshold to a first value when the detected density difference is a first magnitude and to a second value when the detected density difference is a second magnitude, wherein said first value is lower than said second value and said first magnitude is larger than said second magnitude, thereby affecting the pixel binarization.

7. (New) An image processing method for generating a binary image by binarizing pixels of multivalued tones, the method comprising:

determining an intended pixel;  
determining a pixel adjacent to said intended pixel;  
detecting a density difference between said intended pixel  
and said adjacent pixel; and  
setting a value of a binarization threshold to a first value  
when the detected density difference is a first magnitude and to  
a second value when the detected density difference is a second  
magnitude, wherein said first value is lower than said second  
value and said first magnitude is larger than said second  
magnitude.

8. (New) An image processing apparatus for generating a  
binary image by binarizing pixels of multivalued tones, the  
apparatus comprising:

a first determination section that determines an intended  
pixel;

a second determination section that determines a pixel  
adjacent to said intended pixel;

a detection section that detects a density difference  
between said intended pixel and said adjacent pixel; and

a setting section that sets a value of a binarization  
threshold to a first value when the detected density difference  
is a first magnitude and to a second value when the detected

density difference is a second magnitude, wherein said first value is lower than said second value and said first magnitude is larger than said second magnitude.